

Christian Principles
OF
OBEDIENCE
TO THE
Higher Powers.

IN A
SERMON

Preach'd the 29th of *May*, 1713.

AT THE
Cathedral Church of SARUM.

By ARTHUR COLLIER, *Rector of Langford
Magna, near Sarum.*

*Many shall run to and fro, and Knowledge shall be increased;
But the Wise shall understand, Dan. xii. 4. 10.*

L O N D O N,

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T O T H E

Reverend Dr. Younger,

Dean of the Cathedral Church of Sarum.

S I R,

IF You will suffer me, tho' perhaps unknown, to lay the following Discourse before You; it will be hard if I can't find a Reason for doing my self the Honour of chusing *You* my Patron. But when I have gone thro' all the common Topics for Respect and Gratitude, my true Reason is this, because it was *Compos'd* and *Preach'd*, chiefly on the Motive and Influence of *Your Name*. And now, *Sir*, it is come to tell *You* how Your People *fared* in Your Absence.

How they *fed*, I can give You no Account neither, if I cou'd, shou'd I think it worthy of *Your* and the *Public* Notice. To me it sufficeth that I know my own Intentions of being as *useful* as I might. This was my End in *Preaching* it, and this is my best Inducement to the *Publication* of it. For, tho' probably, in the *Composition* some Defects may be discovered by others

Epistle Dedicatory.

to add to the Number of those, which I myself am conscious of, but which I know not how to help; yet, if it be true, which, I think, I have no Reason to doubt of, I dare confidently assert, that its Pretence to *Usefulness*, shall put in for an Equality with any one Book which has been written since the Days of Inspiration.

Yet I am sensible, that neither *this* nor its *Truth*, nor both together, are sufficient, in such an Age as this is, to make one hope very sanguinely for its Success; there being too evident Signs, that our Differences are rather for *Advantage*, than for the Sake of *Truth*.

So that not withstanding my Boast, I am content to wave all my other Pretences, and will insist on no more than *this*, that in publishing this Discourse, I shall not, I hope, indecently enroll, by subscribing my self,

S I R,

Your most Respectful, and

Humble and Obedient Servant,



Arthur Collier.

Christian Principles of Obedience to the Higher Powers.

R O M A N S xiii. i.

Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers.

AS one End of Government is certainly for the Peace and good Order of the World; so for us, who live in it, it must needs be of the greatest Use and good Consequence, to understand the Part we are required to bear in the Advancement of this good End.

I speak particularly of *Subjects*, who are by much the greatest Bulk of Mankind, and on whose Behaviour, more especially, depends the Attainment of this End of Government. Hence we find, that it is to *Subjects* chiefly, and I think *only in the New Testament*, which the Scripture speaks, whenever it enters on the Matter of Government: As if, in Order to the Peace and Welfare of the World, nothing else were requisite, at least nothing much to be insisted on, besides the Share which the Subject has, or ought to have in this great Affair.

Accordingly,

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Accordingly, I have pitched on One of the many Passages of the Gospel, wherein it is evident at first Sight, that the Persons concerned or spoken to, are considered under the Quality or Relation *only* of Subjects.

And, as the Business of declaring to others, what the Will of God is, with Regard to this Matter, is both by the Nature of our Ministry, and also by the express * Commandment of God committed to the *Bishops* and *Pastors* of his Church, (and not to the * Powers themselves to whom we are to be subject) It will, I presume, be interpreted as no Indecency, on my Part, to desire your Attention, at this Time, to these important Words of the Apostle:

Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers.

I am sensible how often this Text has rung in your Ears, especially of late; and also what different Notes it has been made to sound. With some, it has been a *Trumpet* sounding to Arms; with others a *Passing-Bell*, speaking nothing but Death. Some have been so dazzled with the *Pomp of Power*, as to seem utterly to have forgotten, that there is any such Thing as *Privilege* (either Natural or Christian, Absolute or Comparative) on the Part of the Subject: Whilst others have been so wholly taken up with *this*, as to be altogether unmindful of the chief Point which concerns them, their own *Duty of Obedience*: Nay, so strangely have these Words been understood by some, as to be made an Argument for *Non-Obedience*, and even for *Resistance*, on the Principle of Subjection.

In the mean Time, my Desire is so to proceed, as to avoid the Rocks on which others have split; and, since to *understand* the full Sense and Meaning of a Command of God (of which Sort the Text is plainly one) is, I think, all that is requisite towards a full Purpose and Resolution of Obedience to it, (which is *that*, at least chiefly

that

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that, for which a Precept is given) I wou'd chuse to make *this* the first and chief Business of my Discourse to you. After this, I shall spend the Remainder of my Time, suggesting such *Reflections* as will shew the Use of the Words before us. *First* then let us endeavour to understand the Meaning of this Divine Command,

Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers.

I. And here the *first* Thing which occurs, is to shew what is meant by *the Higher Powers*.

By these, I suppose in the *first* Place are meant the *Civil Powers*, such as were then the *Roman Emperors*; and in this, I think, I speak the Sense of all Interpreters.

However, this we may learn from the most probable Occasion of delivering this Precept, which I suppose was this; That at this Time some Christians had entertained a Notion, that by the Covenant of the Gospel they were *actually* and *entirely* set free from all the Powers of the Sort upon Earth. And thus, perhaps, they might have argued.

A Christian, as such, * is *dead*, and † *born again*, and ‡ consequently no longer bound by any of the Laws of his former Nature.

* Col. 3. 3.
Rom. 6. 4.
† John 3. 3.
‡ Rom. 6. 7.
Colos. 2. 2.

In the Act of his new Birth he is * incorporated into *another* Society, and made a Subject of *another* Power, which is not only *another*, but *such another* as lays Claim to all *Right and Jurisdiction both in Heaven and Earth*.

* 1 Cor. 12, 28. He
13. 17. Ma
28. 18, 19.

Every Christian, as such, is made a * Child of *Abraham*, and consequently has a Right to be Partaker of the Covenant, which God made with *Abraham*. But this was proper a *Political* Covenant, wherein the Lord was to be his

* Gal. 3. 2.

Go

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God, in the same exclusive Sense, in which the Kings of the Earth were Gods or Governors of their respective Subjects; and consequently, under this Covenant, it was as great a Transgression, for Abraham, or any of his Posterity to become voluntary Subjects to any human Power, besides that which the Lord their God shou'd institute amongst them, as to bow down to the Gods or Idols of the Heathen.

Add to this, that Christians are told 2 Cor. 5. 17. expressly, That * *old Things are passed away, behold all Things are become new*, as if, when Christ took upon him our Nature, and that too, under the Form of a First-born Son (which was the constant Right on which all the Powers in the World had been used to found their Jurisdiction) in the Act of crucifying this his own Representative Body, he had nailed to the Cross all the ancient Rights and Privileges of Nature, and so had put an End to every Power but his own, which he design'd to institute after his Resurrection. And that this, or something like this, was the Design and Purpose of Christ's Death, is more than intimated to us, where we are told, * That on the Cross he spoiled or stripped Principalities and Powers, making an open Shew, or publick Example of them, and also triumphing over them in himself.

These, or such like Pleas as these, we may suppose were made Use of by some of the first Christians, especially those who had been formerly Jews, whose Covenant, as such, had been always very apt to dispose them to such Kind of Reasonings. But now these, it seems, were false, either in Principle or Consequence; and for this we need no better Argument than the express Words of the Text: *Let every Soul be subject to the Higher*, meaning the Civil, Powers.

True, you'll say, but yet the Difficulty is how to reconcile this Precept, with the Arguments supplied us from

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from other Parts of the Gospel, whereby it seems to have been proved, that every Christian, as such, is free from this Subjection.

I Answer, Let every Man endeavour to dissolve this Difficulty in the best Manner he can, it being One wherein we are all equally concerned: In the mean time, I think it may be done, by granting the Principle, but denying the Consequence of the foregoing Arguments, it being very easie to conceive both *how* and *why* we are made Subjects to this Power, notwithstanding the Right of *Freedom* made over to us in the Gospel.

As to the *how* of this Matter, that the Thing is possible or consistent, one wou'd think we cannot doubt, after that St. Peter has mentioned our *Freedom* in the same Sentence in which he requires our *Subjection*, 1 Pet. ii. 16.

But this perhaps will be best understood by *Instances*.

Abraham had a Right of *Freedom* and *Independance* on every *human* Power, by the very Nature of his Call, which was to leave his * *Country*, * Gen. 12. 1 and his *Kindred*, and his *Father's House*; and † *Acts* 7. 4. yet we find † that when he first set out in Obedience to this Call, his *Father* went with him as far as *Haran*, and there detained him in Suspense from the Execution of this Command during his own Life. Yet all this while *Abraham* was free by the very Nature of his Call, for he was called * *alone*, * *Isai.* 51. 2 notwithstanding that he lived several Years after this in his *Father's House*, and no doubt as much in Subjection to his Authority, as ever he was before in *Ur* of the *Chaldees*.

Again, After his *Father's* Death he went * *actually* into the Land of *Canaan*, taking * Gen. 12. 5 none but *Inferiours* with him; and here it was he was to exercise his Part of the Covenant of being *Alone*, or *Independant* on any Power but that of God.

True, you'l say, and he kept this Covenant, for we never hear that he made the least Advance towards an Incorporation with, or Subjection to any of the Kings of *Canaan*.

Right, but yet we never find that he embroiled their States, or set on foot any Pretence of Independancy, or so much as claimed to himself the least Foot of Ground in the whole Land of *Canaan*; so far from this,
 † *Heb. 11. 9.* that he is celebrated in the † New Testament for *Sojourning in the Land of Promise as in a strange Country*. He was never indeed a Subject any otherwise than of *Peace*, to any of these States; but this is an Effect wholly owing to his *Faith*, which engaged the Providence of his proper God or Government, to interpose on all Occasions * to hinder his Incorporation. But yet still, if the Faith of *Abraham* had failed, and God had actually suffered, or not interposed to hinder him from being a Subject to any of the Kings of *Canaan*, he had probably been in all Respects their Subject, notwithstanding his Right of Freedom.

Another Instance of a State of Freedom consistent with the Duty or Obligation of Subjection, is to be seen in the *Israelites*, during the Time of their Sojourning in *Egypt*. These became thoroughly Subjects to the King of *Egypt*, and yet we need not be told, that all this Time they were the Children of *Abraham*, and had a Right to all his Promises.

Another much like this, is the Case of the same People in after Times being in Captivity under the King of *Babylon*. Here they might possibly think, and they were told too by some of the false Prophets which were amongst them, that the Privileges of their *holy* Covenant were sufficient to justify them in any Method of delivering themselves, or breaking off the Yoke of *Babylon* from their Necks; But yet we find a *Prophet* of the Lord declaring

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declaring the direct contrary to this, saying,
* *Pray for the Peace of Babylon, &c.* telling * Jer. 29. 7.
28. 16. them that they that taught them otherwise,
taught *Rebellion against the Lord.*

The *last* Instance I shall mention to this Purpose shall
be the highest of all Instances, the great Example of our
Redeemer. To believe in him is to be *free*, and there-
fore much more was *he himself free*; and yet the Life he
lived upon Earth was a Life of *Subjection* from his Cradle
to his Cross.

But perhaps the Difficulty of this Matter, if there be
any yet remaining, may be altogether removed by con-
sidering *why* this should be.

The Reason St. *Peter* gives why we shou'd be Subject
to the Higher Powers, is, because we are *Pilgrims* and
strangers in this present World. This, I say, is one Reason
which he gives, but he has another in the same Place,
tho' I know not how it has happen'd that the Particle
or therefore, which connects this Precept of Obedience
with the foregoing Words, is left out in our *new* Tran-
slation) and that is thus expressed: *Having your Conver-*
sation honest amongst the Gentiles, that whereas they speak
against you as Evil Doers, they may by your good Works
which they shall behold, glorify God in the Day of Visitation.
And then follows the Precept, *Submit your selves there-*
fore to every Ordinance of Man, 1 Pet. ii. 13. as much
as if he had said (as he does indeed in the 16th Verse)
tho' by Right of Covenant you are Free, yet you are
not to use your Freedom, as a Cloak for Wickedness or
Disorder. Remember that it does not become Pilgrims
to assert all their Rights and Privileges; and considering
that we are mix'd with such as are apt enough of them-
selves to speak against you as *Evil Doers*, or Seditious
Persons, and that even these are Partakers of the same
General Call with our Selves, and consequently to be
converted as far as lies in our Power; Let us not harden
them

them against the Truth, by increasing the *Offence* which they have taken up against us, which we shou'd certainly do, if we refused to submit to the *Civil Powers*, which are in the World.

But a Reason for this Behaviour may be fetched from a Principle something more universally Conclusive than this last; and that is, from the *Regard* and *Tenderness* which God has always shewn to the *Powers* of the present World. Of this we have seen some Instances in the Case of *Abraham* and his Father, the same *Abraham* and the Kings of *Canaan*, and indeed in every Case which I have before mentioned; And this seems to be founded on no less considerable Principle, than the very

* 1 Cor. 14. 33. Character given of God by the Apostle *
That he is a *God of Peace* or *Order*, and *not of Confusion*.

To these I might add many other Reasons, for which Obedience to these Powers is made our Christian Duty notwithstanding the Freedom of our Call and Covenant; but after all, we need no more than the plain Words of the Text, wherein we are positively commanded to be Subject to the Higher Powers. For, that we *may* be Subject notwithstanding, or consistently with our Right of Freedom, is evident by every Instance which I have given; and it is *here* and *here alone* lies all the Difficulty so that after this, to enquire a Reason why we are to be thus Subject, is to seem to forget that this Subjection is required of us by the Authority of God himself.

This then supposed; our *next* Inquiry relating to these Higher Powers is, Whether Christians, by this or any Precept of the Gospel, are obliged to submit to *all* or *any* of them *indifferently*, or only to *some*, and some *Kind* of Powers.

This, I believe was no Question in the *first Ages* of Christianity, however: it comes to be so celebrated a one

now. They especially who needed a Divine Direction to assure them, that it was at all their Duty to be Subject to the Higher Powers, must needs be supposed to have few or no Scruples concerning the several Kinds of Civil Power, or the Rights and Titles of those who were possessed of it.

Their Examples in these Respects, will needs be allowed to be a good Evidence of their Opinions.

For Instance, to look no farther forward than the very Age of the Apostles. Where do we ever find that they or any of them questioned the several Emperors Titles, in whose Times they preached and practiced Submission? St. Paul appealed to *Cesar*, professing that he stood to be tried at his Judgment-Seat; and yet if Histories misinform us not, it was not because the Apostle had any great Opinion of the *antecedent* Right of the Emperor he appealed to.

And St. John is said to have lived under the Reign of no less than Thirteen Emperors, and we find nothing to the contrary, but that he was equally a Subject to them all: And yet we are strangely mistaken in our Accounts, if all these Thirteen Emperors came possess'd of their Power by only *Rightful Means*.

In like Manner our Saviour Christ trod the Way before them. His Province or Sphere of Action was only in *Judea*, which was a Land given to the Seed of *Israel* for an *everlasting Possession*. Yet all the Time of his Life he lived a peaceable and quiet Subject even to a foreign Power, which had no Pretence of Dominion *there*, but what is usually the worst of all Pretences, commonly call'd the *Right of Conquest*; but which in the then present Case was impossible to be good, by Reason of the Covenant by which that Land was for ever given to others.

Once indeed our Blessed Saviour made a Demur to this Power, but it was only to give himself an Occasion of explaining

explaining on what Account he wou'd *not* Demur to it. For when *Pilate* proceeded so far as to terrifie him with

his Power, for a Contempt of the Court, in not Pleading to his Charge, saying *, *Answerest thou not me? Knowest thou not that I have Power to Crucifie thee, and Power to Release thee?*

Then indeed our Saviour † witnessed a good, *1 Tim. 6. 13.* that is a bold and open Profession, saying, *Thou hadst no Power at all against me, unless it had been given thee from Above, or from a Superiour Power, therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath be greater Sin.* Here indeed he taxes *Pilate's* Right of Judging, at least of asking him the Question they were then upon: This, if of any, was the proper Right of the *Jewish Sanhedrim*: But as they had basely delivered him up into a *Gentile Power*, and by that renounced their superiority, and even their whole Commission, and all appearance of it, from God; he wou'd now submit to be judged by this *Gentile Power* as the *least Irregular of the two.*

Here then we find every Thing irregular besides the behaviour of our Redeemer; And, however he was pleased to tax these Irregularities, yet we find it ended only in *Submission.*

To these I might repeat and add the other Instances before-mentioned; by which we perceived, that a right of Freedom is very consistent with an Obligation of Submission: But as most of these were *then* exempt and particular Cases, and by being all in the *Old Testament* are more liable to be excepted against than others taken from the *New*, I will content my self with the Examples which I have already offer'd, against which, I think, no Objection can be formed.

Yet 'twere worth while to see what our Saviour and his Disciples taught as well as practised. For if their doctrine determines *that* to be of *Right*, which we have just

just now seen to have been the *Fact* or *Act* of their Practice, certainly we can need no farther Evidence.

First, Then let us observe a *Rule*, which, whatever it be, as usually applied to *human* Laws, must needs be granted to be of common and universal Force with regard to the Laws of God ; and that is, *Ubi Lex non Distinguit, non est Distinguendum ; Where the Law makes no Distinction, neither ought we.*

This then, I say, is the Case. We are commanded in the Gospel, *To be subject to the Higher Powers, to * submit to every Ordinance of Man ; to † Render to Cæsar the Things that are Cæsar's,* (that is, to pay him Tribute of the Money coined by his Order) not to *speake Evil* of our respective Governors (as in the Case * of * *Acts* 23. 5. St. Paul before *Ananias* the High Priest) tho', with him, we apprehend them not to be such by *Divine*, or any *Antecedent* Right at all ; to be * *subject to Principalities and Powers ;* * *Tit.* 3. 1. and all this in *general Terms*, without a Word or Hint of the least Regard to be had to their respective *Titles*, viz. of one more than another ; and therefore, without any Respect at all besides that of *Possession*, which is that which makes and determines them to be what they are supposed, our *Respective* Governors. But,

Secondly, How agreeable is this to the first Reasons, next to the Command, which do, or ought to induce us to submit at all to the Power we are speaking of, or to any Form or Kind of it ?

One of these was our Character, as *Pilgrims* and *Strangers* in this present World ; and this (for Brevity's Sake) is all that I shall here repeat.

How unsuitable wou'd it be to a *Pilgrim's* Character to make any Inquiry into the *Right* or *Title*, by which his

Host has Possession of his House of Entertainment? If he came by it *fraudulently*, what is that to the *Traveller*? or if *legally*, that is no Addition to his Entertainment, and so of no Consequence to be known by him, before he resolves to conform himself to the *Rules and Orders* of the House. But,

Thirdly, His *Host* is supposed of Course to have a *Flaw* in his Title, either more or less; If not in the *Means of Possession*, yet in the *Kind of Power*, which he is supposed to be Invested with: And this being a Fault in the *first Concottion*, can never be mended in the *second*. So that, if, as it appears, it is a Christian's Duty to submit or become Subject to *any Powers* of this Kind, this Submission must needs be determined by *Possession*. And this,

Fourthly is implied in the very Name of *Freedom*. To submit as *Free*, according to *St. Peter*, wou'd be a strange *Solecism* in Speech, next kin to a Contradiction, if the Power submitted to, were obeyed on the Account of his *Right* who Governs. This wou'd be to make *Freedom* and *Subjection*, not only *consistent*, so as to meet in one *Person*, but to stand for the same *Thing*, which is the Way to nothing but *Darkness and Confusion*.

To these I might add many other Arguments, which yet for brevity's sake I must content my self to omit. But yet One there is, which I must not omit, and that is the latter Part of the Verse wherein is the *Text*.

In the Text it self, the Apostle requires our Subjection to the Higher Powers *at large*, or in indefinite Terms. This, perhaps, might have seemed to have left Room for others to have gone besides his Meaning, (tho' I think we have already seen, it must have been altogether without Reason) on which Account, he seems to have added the following Words, that, if *Words* are at all sufficient to this End, we may not possibly mistake his Meaning

Meaning. And they are these. *For there is no Power but of God, the Powers that be, are Ordained of God.* Here the Particle *For*, connects this with the Precept, and I think is not to be accounted for, without making the latter Part stand for a Reason, or Account, at least, an Explanation of the former part of the Verse. And thus I understand it, as if the Apostle had said; Wou'd you know why I say, to the Higher Powers *indefinitely*, without Exception or Limitation, *viz.* to the right of one, or of one kind of Power more than another? It is because I mean it without Exception. *For there is no kind of Power, (whether Monarchy, Aristocracy, or Democracy) but what is of God; The Powers that be, viz. the Persons in Possession, abstracting from their Kind of Power, are Ordained of God.*

That this is the true Interpretation of these Words, and no Addition to the *necessary* Sense of the Text, is evident for this Reason alone, in that if *any*, or *any kind* of Power, which is supposed to *be*, is said to be not of God, or not to be Ordained of him, the Apostle's Words are not then so much as true, *That there is no Power but of God, The Powers that be, are Ordained of God.* And this is all the Pains my Time will suffer me to be at to justify this Interpretation.

II. But there is an Objection, or rather Difficulty in the Words either *thus*, or any *otherwise* understood, which must not pass unsatisfied; and that is this. How to understand such Powers to be *of God* or to be *Ordained* of him, which are supposed to stand only on the Foot of *Fact* or *Possession*. That some such there are or have been, too evident to be questioned, and even these by the Apostle's Words are supposed to be said to be Ordained of God. But this, as I just now observed is not all the Difficulty. For St. Peter * seems * 1 Pet. 2. 13. to describe the very *kind* it self, at least the

best of the Kind which is *Monarchy*, by no other Title than that of *κλῆρος ἀνθρώπων*, translated *Ordinance of Man*, but much better render'd *Human Creature*, or Institution. And, when our Saviour wou'd explain the *Nature* of his Kingdom, so as to *distinguish* it from that of *Cesar*, or any Power upon Earth, he has these Words * *Joh. 18. 36. to Pilate* *, *My Kingdom is not of, or from, this World*, ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, that is, *is not from hence*, as explained in the following Words.

But to this the Answer is plain and easie, (unless we will chuse to expunge that Text which we most dislike) and that I think must be this.

What is easier than to conceive that it is, or may be the Will of God and his *Ordinance*, that we submit to Powers who are on no Foot but Possession? This has appeared already, in great Variety, to be our Duty. If so is not this enough to justify the *Expression*, that they are *Ordained of God*?

But are we about to vindicate *St. Paul*, as if we doubted of the Truth or Propriety of his Words, who has actually and plainly said, *The Powers that be, are Ordained of God*? God forbid.

But yet granting that his Words are no more than the Words of Men, even thus we can have no Pretence to cavil at the *Expression*. For, this is a known Rule of arguing, and of understanding another's Argument, *To suppose no more in the Premises, than is infer'd or mentioned in the Conclusion*. But now in every Precept, the Preceptive Part is always the Conclusion, and that, in the present Case, are the Words of my Text, *Let every Soul be Subject, &c.* To inforce this, we are told in the next Words, that *there is no Power but of God, the Powers that be, are Ordained of God*. How then is this, but so of God and so Ordained of him, as that it is his Will and Ordinance that all Christians shou'd be Subject to them? And especially I say, *How*? When God has told us in another Place

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Place, that the Powers supposed, are, as to their Institution, only the Ordinance of Man. And still *How* more especially, when the very *Text* which saith they are the Ordinance of God, supposes them or some of them to be no other in themselves, than *ἑστίαι* *Being, Existing, or Possessing* Powers? Of such as these the Question and the whole Difficulty proceeds, with regard to the Text it self; And where now is the Difficulty of conceiving how they are meant to be the Ordinance of God, to whom we are to be Subject, by the Ordinance or Command of God?

Do we scruple to say, in *Baptism* we are *born again*, upon our *Saviour's* Testimony, because *Nicodemus* had the literal Truth of Fact on his side, when he asked the Question, *How can a Man be born when he is old?* And yet how are we born again in Baptism, but as we say, *in Effect*, that is, to all Intents and Purposes, as much as if we did indeed enter a second Time into our Mothers Womb and so be born? And thus, consistently with *St. Peter*, and our *Saviour's* Words to *Pilate*, we understand *St. Paul*, when he saith, *There is no Power but of God, the Powers that be, are Ordained of God.*

Having seen *what* and *who* are meant by the *Higher Powers*, and in what Sense they are said to be *Ordained of God*, I shou'd now proceed to explain the *Nature of our Subjection*, and also to examin its *Extent* with Regard to *Persons*; But my Time forbids me to do any more than just touch on these two Heads.

III. As to the Nature of our *Subjection*, I know not how I can describe it better in few Words, than *St. Peter* has done, in requiring us to be *Subjects as Free*. As for Instance,

Pilgrims are free in the Places where they Travel. They are not at Home, but on their Journey homewards. For this Reason they are as little anxious about the

own *Properties or Privileges*, as about the *Rights* of those with whom they happen to sojourn. If they meet with good Usage, or a kind Entertainment, they impute it first to God, and afterwards to their Host, and accordingly return their best Thanks and Acknowledgements. But if they happen to meet with Injuries on their Way, they submit and pass on, expecting better Things at home.

Abraham, as you have heard, was one of these Pilgrims, tho' he lived in his own Country.

* Gen. 20. He suffered his *Wife* to be taken from him *, by one of the Kings of *Canaan*, trusting God with the Event. And tho' his Faith and Strength were sufficient, where he knew it to be
† Gen. 20. lawful, to subdue † five Kings and their Armies; yet *here* he acted as one careful of
§ Gen. 17. 16. his Life, suffering *her* who had the § *Promise*, to be ravished from his Arms, without offering at Resistance.

His Seed in Egypt were others of these Pilgrims, and of these I have observed already, how they answered their Character, by Submission to the present Government.

But I cannot pass by the particular Instance of *Moses*. He was Heir Apparent to the Crown of *Egypt*, and so might humanly expect, that when he succeeded, he should have it easily in his Power, to deliver his People from the Bondage they lay under. But instead
* Heb. 11. 24, of this he * renounced his Right, voluntarily
25, 27. incurred the King's Displeasure, and at last fled from all human Possibility of succeeding him.

Others of these Pilgrims were the Jews in the Land of *Babylon*, of whom we have seen already, what Sort of Submission was then required of them, by their own God, even the God of *Israel*.

And

And, to name no more, our Blessed Saviour, tho' he came to his own, yet when they received him not, acted suitably to the Character and Condition of a Pilgrim. His Submission even to Death, considering all the Circumstances of it, is beyond Description; but as we are told by St. Peter, * *That even hereunto we* * 1 Pet. 2. 21. *are called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an Example, that we shou'd follow his Steps* (making that a Law to us, which otherwise might have been looked upon only as an Example) it will be well worth our While, to take Notice of the Account or Reason, which he himself gives for his Submission. If my Kingdom, saith he, * *were of this World, then* * Job. 18. 36. *wou'd my Servants fight, or have fought, that I shou'd not have been delivered to the Jews, but now is my Kingdom, not from hence*; the plain Consequence of which is; that therefore neither does it become my Servants to make Resistance in my Behalf. And if it is contrary to our Christian Character, or to the Name we bear of being *Servants of Christ*, to disorder States and Governments by any forcible Resistance, even in the Behalf of our God and Saviour; certainly that must be a mighty Cause indeed, which is sufficient to justify us in the Use of such Means.

I know not any Objection that can be brought against this Rule and Practtice, unless it be, that we now stand very differently related to the Higher Powers, and they to us, from what was the Case in the Days of Primitive Christianity.

I shall not enlarge on, or explain this Difference, or so much as grant or deny, that there is any such Thing in Fact; but this I will be bold to say; That be the Difference what it will, if it prove not to be founded on some Divine Establishment, posterior to that, by which the first Church was founded, and stood related to the Civil Power, whatever Rights and Privileges may, be

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Compact, or base Agreement, accrue to the *Higher Powers themselves*, that is, however *Subjects* may have increased their own *Burdens*, it is impossible for any Act of this Kind to make the least Addition to the *Gospel-Pri-
vilege* of the *Subject*. So that still we are returned to the *Primitive Time* of Christianity, from whence to take our View of the true *Nature of Subjection*.

IV. And now a Word or two of the *Extent* of this Duty, with Regard to *Persons*, and I come instantly to my *Reflections*.

Here the Apostle is express; *Let every Soul be subject*. That is, every Christian who is in the Relation or Condition of a *Subject*. Thus it may extend to *Kings* or *Princes*, who together with their *Names*, are yet really and truly in the Condition of *Subjects*. And it may extend yet something farther than this, even to those who are not properly, or in all Respects *Subjects*, but *Competitors* for Power, so as to be a Rule, obliging them to Peace and Quietness (in Imitation of *Abraham*, whose Case was much like this) till such Time as God shall open a fair and orderly Way for their Possession. But—after we all believe, that this Command of the Apostle's was given to Christians, and he himself has comprehended *every Soul* within the Terms of it, to begin to doubt or question, whether the *Clergy* as well as *Laity* are bound to this Subjection, favours, in my Opinion, of a light and inconsistent spirit, (to say no worse of it) and does not so much as deserve an Answer.

And now I think I have gone thro' every Article of my Text, so that Nothing remains but to suggest some *Reflections* which will shew the Use of the foregoing Doctrine.

I. *First* then I observe, that this Ordinance of God to be subject to the present Power, is properly and exclusively a *Christian* Ordinance.

Before this, Men were bound either by the Law of *Nature*, or that of *Moses*.

By the Law of *Moses*, the *Israelites*, (once settled in the Land of *Canaan*) were commanded and sworn to maintain their Ground, I mean, their Freedom and Independancy, in the Land which God had given them, by any Means whatsoever. This was their Religion, being the *First* and Fundamental Article of their Covenant. Accordingly, they were told, That if they would be faithful and valiant, or not wanting to themselves, God would so work with them, as that *one should chase a Thousand* and *two put ten Thousand to flight*; and this, whenever they should return and repent, how long Time soever their Enemies may have had Dominion over them.

For this, *Gideon* and *Barak*, *Samson* and *Jephtha*, *David* and *Samuel*, and many others are recorded, and much commended in the Word of God.

Indeed the Case was different, whenever they happened to be carried away Captive, or so much as to sojourn in any Land but their own. And even in their *own*, before they had *formally* taken Possession of it, they were not permitted to make the least Resistance, till the Time was come, in which the Sins of the Inhabitants were full, which was known to none but God, and therefore no Resistance was to be set on Foot, but by his Order. Now we find one Instance, *viz.* the great Revolt which was made under *Jeroboham*, wherein it was not lawful, even for the *Heir of David* to assert his Right; no, nor for the Revolted People themselves to pull down by Force the unjust Power they had set up.

But these and such like, were all *Exempt* and *Peculiar Cases*, with regard to their *Holy Covenant*. Founded indeed they were on a *general Rule*, which shou'd hereafter be *so* declared, but yet a *secret* one for the Time; and accordingly, we always find some *particular Message* or *Command* from God, requiring this *Submission* of them. And thus Things continued amongst the Jews, whilst the Law of *Moses* stood, or continued to be of full Force.

But now, as all but these were *without God in the World*, they had no Rule to go by but the Law of *Nature*.

By this, the *Right* of Power, and the *Duty* of Obedience stood *reciprocally* related. To suppose *either one* of these, was of Course to suppose *the other*. And this, (they having no *Revelation* to make *Exceptions* for them) entirely precluded them from Subjection to any Power, but what they held to be the *most Rightful*.

But now under the *Gospel*, we find it otherwise determined, and therefore *here* we are to fix the true Original of the Obligation of submitting to the Higher Powers *indefinitely*; which makes the Precept in the *Text*, to be properly and exclusively a *Christian Ordinance*. If so, how justly.

II. *Secondly*, May we reprove their Doctrine, who say, that Christ in his Gospel, has done nothing New, made
no Alteration in Matters of Government, but
left the Governments of the World as he found
*them *?*

See Dr. Hig-
 gen's View, &c.
 v. 7. p. 88.

True indeed, our Blessed Saviour, neither acted, nor set Order, for any forcible *Resistance*, but on the contrary as forbidden it. But yet, if to *make all Things new*; to *spoil Principalities and Powers*, crucifying them in *Effigy*;

Effigy; if to institute and erect a Government, which however gently to be propagated, was yet promised to be perpetual, and is in its own Nature *Catholic*; And in a Word, if to give Order for the Time to come, that all Obedience shou'd be paid to the *present* Powers of the World, not on the Account of the *Excellency* of *their Kind*, either in General, or in Particular, or of the *Antecedent* Rights, (whether of *Primogeniture*, or *Election*, or any Right of *Nature*) which one Power or Person may pretend, or have above another, but altogether on the Account of their being the Powers *that be*; If such Things as these, I say, will amount to the doing *any thing New*, or making any Alteration in Matters of Government, then is it not a *true*, however *celebrated* a Maxim, that Christ in his Gospel has made no Alteration, but left the Governments of the World as he found them.

But were this ever so true in it self, it is methinks strangely *inconsistent*, in the Mouths of those, who contend at the same time that Submission is *therefore* due to the Regnant Power, because it is so declared by *human* Laws and Statutes. For certainly the Rights of Nature, are better than no Rights at all; or be they what they will, if they are not *altered* or *overruled*, they are *confirmed* and *established*, by every Precept of the Gospel requiring us to be Subject to the Higher Powers. So that, how, in this Case, *human* Laws and Statutes should become our Principle of Obedience, when they declare the contrary to the Rights and Duties of Nature, is, I confess, beyond my Capacity to apprehend.

But 'tis here supposed that the *Gospel* has actually interposed to make that our Duty, which is contended for from *human* Laws; and therefore as both the *Gospel* and these, are plainly an Interruption of the Rights
D and

and Duties of Nature, it can never be true, that the State of Government in the World is left by our Saviour Christ altogether as he found it. Yet,

III. *Thirdly*, Tho' the Gospel and human Laws, happen to speak the same Thing, (as indeed 'tis fit they shou'd) yet it is *that* and not *these*, which is the Ground and Measure of our Subjection to the Higher Powers; or, in other Words, *Right* is not, as it held by * some, *nothing else but Conformity to Law*.

* *Id.* p. 87.

This, it seems had not been true, if the Word of God had not interposed, no not so much as by any General Precept; but how far then is it *now* from being true, after we have seen and believe that God has actually said, *The Powers that be, are Ordained of God?* Hence,

IV. *Fourthly*, We find a great Defect in the Rule given us by Grotius †, That the Interpretation of the Obligation of the Oaths taken to the Civil Magistrate, is the Province of Statesmen and Lawyers, and not of Divines.

* *Votum pro Pace*, pag. 63.

See Dr. Higd. pag. 85. 88.

Statesmen indeed and *Lawyers*, those I mean who happen to be in the Secret of an Oath, (if any such there be) are doubtless better qualified to reveal this Secret, than those who have nothing but the Words before them; but 'tis the Word of God which determines our Obedience, and therefore it is *their* peculiar Province to declare what this is, whose Business it is to Interpret the Word of God.

And

And this, I think with Submission, had *still* been their Province, or nevertheless their *Right*, tho' in a late great Trial of Affliction, it had been determined otherwise. Together with these,

V. *Fifthly*, (great indeed is the Pity!) Falls the Mighty, the celebrated Patriarchal Scheme.

Falls, I say, that is *fails*, or becomes *old* and *useless*. True indeed it is still, (if it was ever true) for ought any Thing that is declared in the Gospel to the contrary; nay, and is yet of *Use* and the proper *Rule* to go by, where the Question is not concerning *Obedience*, but *Possession*: That is, a Rule to those who are any Way concerned to supply a *Vacant* Throne: And here I see not how it can be carried too far, supposing first that we are agreed to have it filled at all, on the foot of *Natural* or *mere Human* Right; But, what is all this to determine our *Obedience*, when it is once *actually* filled, after God has determined for us, that *the Powers that be are Ordained of him*? But,

VI. *Sixthly*, If the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Ungodly and the Sinner appear? In what Order of Truths must *those Opinions* stand, which are not fetched from *Corrupt* or *Old*, but *Corrupted* Nature? Whose *Principles* were either never good even in a *Gentile* State of Things, or at best, good only for a *Time* and *Place* also, under the Jewish Covenant, which is long since done away; but whose *Conclusions* are directly contrary to the Gospel?

To prescribe *Order* and *Obedience*, from an *obsolete*, or *human*, or *mistaken* Principle, is indeed an *Error*, but yet it may be a well-meaning one, and is no more than

Human: But to preach *Disorder* and *Rebellion* on such Topics even as these, is not only *Not*, but *Anti-Christian* Doctrine.

But here I must again remind my self of my *Time*, to give a Check to a Zeal, however Just, on this Occasion. Yet I cannot pass by *one particular* Branch of this *Unregenerated* Doctrine, which is designed to justify

Resistance against the Present Power, from the Example of * *Mattathias*, or any Jew in his own Land, whilst the first Covenant continued.

And yet the *Answer* to this Pretence is too obvious to be insisted on, there being so plain a *Difference* between *their* Condition and *ours*; If it be true, as I think I have shewn, that to be subject to the Higher Powers indefinitely, is a *Christian*, and altogether a *Christian Ordinance*.

If we wou'd make the *Jews* or *Israelites* our Example, Let us consider them as *Sojourners* in *Egypt*, or in the Land of *Babylon*, or even in their own Land under the *Roman* Power, after *Christ* had, in himself, nailed their Covenant to his Cross: But to make them our Precedents, even in their own Land, before it was polluted or made common, and whilst their Covenant stood, and this too in *Contradiction* to a plain *Christian* Precept, is something more than to forget, that we are not *Jews*, but *Christians*. And yet this, I think, is the best String in their Bow, who have been used of late to shoot *Rights of Resistance* against the Sovereign Power.

In the mean time,

VII. *Seventhly*, Let all who are true hearted, return God, the God of Order and of Patience, our most solemn, and humble, and hearty Thanks, for the *Great Blessing of this Day*; which was procured to us, not by

by *Tumult* and *Disorder*, (when yet too many there were, who waited nothing but an Opportunity, to justify Right by such unrighteous Means) but by every Step and Method of *Tranquillity*.

This, probably, was given us as a Reward of our *Patience*; of *theirs*, I mean, who were content to wait upon God; And that in following their Example, at least in holding the same Christian Principles, we may either never for the future, *despair* of a like Mercy, or at least never *want* a Subject, so near at Home as this is, whereon to exercise our *Thanksgivings* towards God. And now,

VIII. *Lastly*: If these are *Christian* Principles, I am sure you will say they are Principles of *Peace*.

How evidently they tend to establish Peace, in the whole Christian World, by *securing* all Higher Powers from every Hand but their *own*, we cannot chuse but perceive; which wou'd make a Man of *Tenderness*, even *wish* them to be true, tho' he were not aware that they are delivered to us in the *Gospel*: But,

If over and above all this, they tend to *lay the Dust*, or compose all Difference, in the midst of a *divided* and *distracted* Nation, on the most *Honourable Terms*, that *either Party* can require: This surely should incline us all to an immediate *Truce*, at least in order to examin them. But now, What pretence to this Purpose, (next to that of their being true) can be so *Honourable* on all Hands, as that they are not the Principles of a *Party*, whether *High* or *Low*, *Whigg* or *Tory*, *Jewish*, *Heathenish*, or so much as *Human*, which of it *self* is next to a Demonstration of their being *Christian*? But whatever they be, (for this must be tried only by

by what has gone before) it is surely a Recommendation of them, that they plead not for a *Peace of Conquest*, of one Party over another, but a *Peace of Mutual Agreement*; wherein both Sides are supposed to make Concessions to each other.

Certainly, as Christians, it becomes us all to lend an Ear to such a Cause; And if an End, thus always good and necessary, can ever be more *seasonable* at one Time than another, *Peace* methinks, at *Home*, shou'd *now* be the most proper Subject of our Inquiry.

But--- This I am sensible is a *Peace*, which the *World* and all the Powers of it put together, are unable to give, and is so far *evidently* the *Peace of God*, as to be only in his Disposal.

Justly does this Damp every human Project, be it ever so well intended, and naturally turns all our Reasonings into *Prayer*; That the good God, who is the God of Order and of Peace, wou'd incline our Hearts to Things that *make for Peace*.

Peace before *himself*, *Peace* before the *Best of Sovereigns*.

Peace outwardly *amongst*, and *Peace* inwardly *within* our Selves.

Peace as we are *Subjects*, but much more as we are *Christians*. And in a word,

Such Peace, as the Word of God prescribes the Terms of, even He, the Great *Word* and *Wisdom* of God, who sweetly and alone reconcileth all Things both in Heaven and Earth.

Yet still, *Blessed is the People whose God is the Lord*, Psal. 144. 13.



F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

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